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Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality
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CIRCULAR LETTER: DHCQ 08-10-500

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Acute Care Hospitals
Massachusetts Public Health Hospitals

FROM: Paul Dreyer, Ph.D., Bureau Director

DATE: October 17, 2008

RE: Influenza Vaccination Data Collection

Similar to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Joint Commission, the Department of Public Health encourages hospitals to offer influenza vaccine to their personnel including hospital staff and independent practitioners working in the hospital. As you launch your vaccine program for this year, acute care hospitals and State hospitals will be required to report the number of vaccinations given in 2008-09 to the Betsy Lehman Center as part of the Healthcare Associated Infection Program. This year is a pilot year in which the Department will evaluate its approach to collecting influenza vaccination rates and consider the potential for public reporting in future years.

The following steps should be taken immediately:

- 1) Designate a lead person responsible for influenza vaccine tracking in your organization this season (e.g., senior staff from your Occupational Health, Quality or Infection Prevention Department).
- 2) Submit an email message to the technical support center at haihelp@jsi.com (JSI support center on behalf of DPH) or call 617-385-3992 to register this lead person for the upcoming training program and other technical communications related to the influenza vaccination reporting. Provide name, title, phone and email contact information.
- 3) As you administer influenza vaccine for this season, track whether the person is an employee of your hospital as defined by their inclusion on your payroll at the time of vaccination and incorporate this data element into your records.

Note: Other personnel working within your facility who are independent practitioners, employees of other organizations (i.e., universities, practice groups, temporary agencies, etc.) or who are unpaid (i.e., students, volunteers, etc.) should also have access to influenza vaccine but tracking of these individuals is not a requirement for this year.

Detailed training on the new reporting requirement and specification of the measure will be provided during a conference call on Tuesday December 9, 2008 at 11:00 am. The person designated as the hospital's lead for this effort should plan to participate in this call.

The first date for reporting on influenza vaccinations administered will be February 15, 2009. At that time, hospitals will be required to submit two numbers:

- 1) Number of employees immunized by the hospital between October 1, 2008 and January 30, 2009.
- 2) Number of hospital employees on the payroll on January 30, 2009.

On April 15, 2009, hospitals will again submit data on employees immunized through March 30, 2009 and the total employees on the payroll on March 30, 2009.

We recognize that facilities are taking various approaches to monitoring the impact of their immunization programs. Optional data elements that can also be submitted on April 15 include:

- 1) Total personnel immunized through March 30, 2009: the cumulative number of vaccine doses given to hospital workers or volunteers, whether or not they are hospital employees.
- 2) The total number of hospital employees who received their vaccine outside of the hospital's program.

Hospitals may have conducted surveys of staff to determine immunization patterns and reasons for declining a vaccination. Hospitals who wish to submit the optional data elements to gain a more comprehensive estimate of their immunization rate are encouraged to do so at the end of the season, but these elements are NOT required this year.